

ROLE OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN GUJARAT: A GEOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

Gujarat's tourism industry is one of the most diverse products on the global scene. To develop and promote tourism as an 'Engine of economic growth' and to bring Gujarat on the national and international tourist map, tourism shall be considered as an important economic activity for overall sustainable economic growth & ensuring employment generation. As the State is growing rapidly in tourism sector, there is good chance for the development of employment generation opportunity. Tourism sector is having highest employment potential industry with approximately 90 jobs creation per Rs.10 lacs investment. With exploring large investment potential and by attracting large investment in the sector, large employment opportunity shall be created. Infrastructure is an important determinant for economic development & State thus offers a high scope for profuse employment generation & related activities in the form of accommodation projects, food oriented projects, amusement parks and water sports, etc.

As per the latest annual report of the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment, Gujarat provided jobs through the exchanges to 2.14-lakh people during 2009, as against that to 3.09-lakh in the entire country and the maximum percentage goes to tourism industry. Now the State Government has decided to develop eight tourism-hubs for an all-round growth of tourism sector in Gujarat, which would definitely increase more employment opportunities. This paper highlights the role of tourism industry in boosting employment and to search major areas where one can look for more opportunities. The Government is also trying to encourage service-oriented projects like travel operation, tour operation, transport operation, etc. The practical approach of the government of Gujarat in the form of strategic planning and consistent and positive policy initiatives has been a major boom for the employment sector.

KEYWORDS: Tourism, Development, Employment, Eco-Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism with its wide range of constituent sub sectors is now world's largest industry. It is much of the labour intensive type of Industry as it undertakes to provide work for a large number of people. Today the world tourism industry is becoming a major attraction for the people for the employment. The employment and tourism is intrinsically co-related to each other as it has long-term socio-economic impacts on the host economy and community. The tourism impacts on employment go beyond employment in sectors in which tourists directly spending their money, such as hotels, restaurants and airlines. The establishments which receive tourists also buy goods and services from other sectors that generate employment in those sectors through multiplier effect. As compare to other economic activity the tourism provides direct employment opportunities.

The present paper highlights the role of tourism industry in generating employment with special reference to Gujarat. In India, there has been 220.1 million domestic tourist visits in the year 2000 that increased to 234.8 million in the year 2001 and 273.3 million in 2002. In the year 2003, 2.75 million tourists visited the country. The different types of tourism development require a huge number of labours, skilled and semi-skilled both. Conservative estimates of tourism related employment (base year 2002) by our professionals reveal that tourism generates about 7.5 million full time job equivalents in India. It translates to about 11 million actual jobs.

OBJECTIVE & METHODOLOGY

The main objectives of this study are:

- To search the prospective role of tourism industry in boosting employment with special reference to Gujarat and
- To search major areas where one can look for more opportunities in employment generation.

This paper is very much conceptual in nature and the analysis is based on the information gathered during the field visit & available secondary sources and literature reviews. The secondary sources include the report collected during the field visit (GTCL), socio-economic review, Gujarat State (2007-08), various articles at state, national & international level. Because of the unavailability of data regarding the number of employed people in tourism Industry only, the study is totally based on the available qualitative data rather on numerical values. In my study more emphasis will be given to exceptional natural & man made beautiful formations and sceneries of the area & how it encourage more and more population to joined year by years.

STUDY AREA, LOCATION AND EXTENT

The study area, (coordinates between 20°06'N and 68°10'E / 24°42'N 74°28'E) is located north of Maharashtra, west of Madhya Pradesh and South west of Rajasthan, encompassing an area of 196,024 km². Since the study area is not concentrated to any particular place or point I have taken the whole Gujarat in general and highlighted only about potential areas for employment generation from available tourism infrastructures. Gujarat is now becoming a tourism hub & simultaneously a potential area for employment generation. Actually the Gujarat Tourism is still at a sprouting stage and lots of things to be done in the coming years. Besides, tourism development it also will opens up new opportunities to provide employment for large section of population. As the tourism is human resource oriented industry, so yet more opportunities to be expected in future, mainly for unemployed section of population.

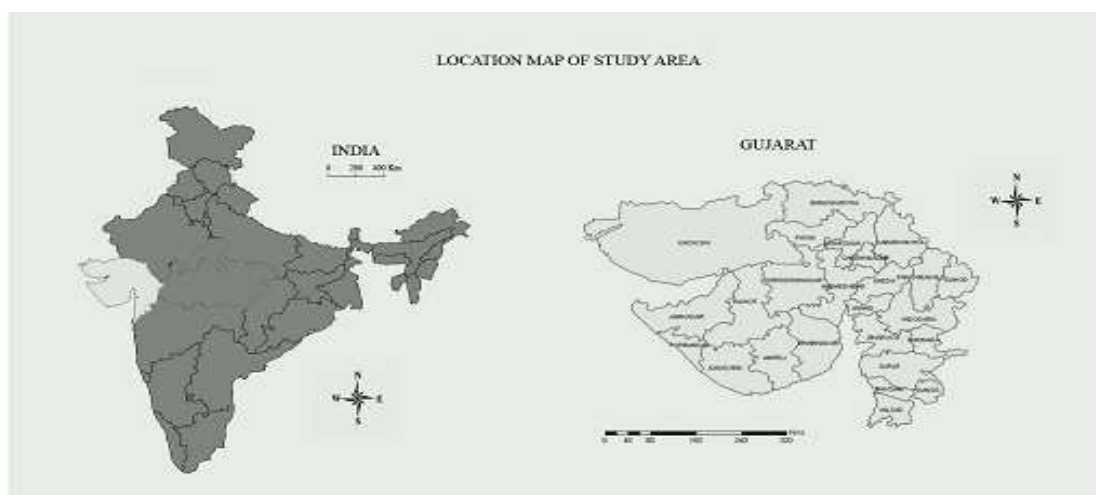


Figure 1

TOURISM & EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

Tourism, being a service industry, it has a significant effect on those areas which has surplus labour, because for this sector the skilled & efficient human resources are extremely important. It has a great effect on local population employment. There is a positive relationship between the growth of tourism and increasing employment advantages. This also helps in minimize the extremities of poverty. In the field of construction, advertisement & management (of infrastructural facilities) of tourist centers, a large number of professional & unprofessional (skilled, semi skilled and unskilled) are required. The proper utilization of these available human resources could be an asset for tourism development & side by side further prediction of employment.

GUJARAT TOURISM AND EMPLOYMENT

The Gujarat economy is characterized by industrial & agricultural sectors, whereas, the industries play a very important role in minimizing the problem of employment. Dairy farming, primarily concerned with milk production, is also a job sector. The state's textiles, petroleum, cement, vegetable oil, chemical, pharmaceutical, petrochemicals and fertilizer industries are also highly important in generating employment.

Tourism is a labour intensive industry. It definitely helps a state economy in a variety of ways. As per increasing importance of Gujarat state in terms of investment destination, entering into new era of immense employment generation, particularly in the tourism sector. As per my visits at various tourist places and discussed with various stakeholders in the local tourism markets, brought out various constraints faced by tourism industry at various tourist destinations in the state. Major constraints are poor quality of infrastructure, malpractices by operators and the major is the manpower, not being qualified resulting in poor quality of service. It is true that after consideration of tourism as an industry, there is increase of employment opportunities in the state, but still there are some areas where this advantage is lacking. The emergence of new areas as a tourist destination, require proper management of employment.

Tourism creates large number of direct jobs in establishment like hotels, restaurants, tourist shops, travel agencies and also in transport, handloom and handicraft industries in the state. It also generates certain category of workers like interpreters, guides, tour operators etc. Those directly employed in the tourism industry creates indirect employment in certain other sectors through their demand for goods and services. In most of the districts of Gujarat the development of tourism, has created the jobs by building construction industry, by stimulated growth in ancillary trades such as arts and crafts, sanitary ware, glassware, crockery, linen, furnishing and furniture and many others.

POTENTIAL OF TOURISM IN CATERING EMPLOYMENT

Tourism is an income multiplier (Kumar A, 2005). If both domestic and international tourists visit Gujarat, its youths would be employed in hotels, restaurants, bars, discotheques (leisure), sea resorts, beaches, transport organizations, airlines and hotels. This list is not comprehensive. Further, people can also be employed in those industries that support the tourism industry of the state. To sum up, Gujarat tourism has vast potentiality for generating employment and earning large sums of foreign exchange besides giving impulse to the state's overall economic and social development. Much has been achieved by way of increasing transportation air seat capacity, increasing trains and railway connectivity to important tourist destinations, four-laning of roads connecting important tourist centers and increasing availability of accommodation by adding heritage hotels to the hotel industry and encouraging paying guest accommodations. Since tourism is a multi-dimensional activity, it would be worth to say that it has enormous capacity to rectify the unemployment problems in the state. Only the necessary thing is that all wings of the Central and State governments, private sector and voluntary

organizations should become active partners in making Gujarat to become a world player in the tourist industry. The growing economy, impetus on infrastructure development, enabling business environment, strong market fundamentals & large and growing talent pool are some of the new areas where the probability of employment can be boosted.

There is plentiful opportunity for young, dynamic professionals in the tourism industry. The Gujarati people, there is no doubt are highly qualified people, possessing professional knowledge from various fields. Most sectors of tourism industry are labour intensive, and require relatively short training for most jobs. The employment can be created with relatively low investment in fixed assets per employee. Major areas where the employment benefits can be hunted out are in the hotels, resorts and other recreational areas. In the large hotels and resort areas more than 100 employees each can get the jobs. The hotels and other accommodations industry is expected to provide many new jobs over the 2006-16 period.

DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

Major Areas where Employment can be Boosted through Tourism

Gujarat has immense potentialities lies in its culture and population. In the state there are more than 400 archaeological sites, the important ones are Lothal, Surkotada and Dholavira. Being a hub of India's westernmost cultural heritage, it has great potentiality in engaging manpower. Every year a large number of tourists visit Gujarat and if there is an increase in the number of visitors to a destination, there is bound to be an increase in the manpower requirements of the travel industry. The development of hotel industry could become the crucial way to cater the need of the tourist and for a better service a huge involvement of personals (labours) are required. A 30% increase in the occupancy of tourist hotel will result in increasing the demand for more staff at the hotel counter, drivers, guides and shops, etc. It is the direct employment resulting from increased flow of tourism.

The Kutch region is now emerging as a major tourist hub in the Gujarat. The Runn is known for its traditional culture. Its role in the tourism development also should not be ignored. The development of resorts helps in the direct and indirect employment to the local people. More than 80% of those employed in the resort including the manager, receptionist, kitchen staff, drivers, maids and housekeeping cleaners, janitors, waiters, cleaners and housekeeping staffs and in food preparation and serving jobs, including waiters and waitresses, bartenders, fast food and counter workers. Larger hotels employ chefs and head cooks who create menus, develop recipes, and oversee food preparation operations and personnel. Restaurant cooks specialize in the preparation of many different kinds of foods and menu items, generally cooking from scratch and typically only when ordered by diners. They make sure that guests not only have clean rooms, but have all the necessary furnishings and supplies. Workers in the various food preparation and serving occupations deal with customers in the dining room or at a service counter. Waiters and waitresses take customers orders, serve meals, and prepare checks. In smaller establishments, they often set tables escort guests to their seats accept payment, and clear tables. In larger restaurants, some of these tasks are assigned to other workers.

The region is benefited by the tourists coming to the resort as guests of Rann Riders are taking camel cart rides, horse riding, camel rides, bullock-cart rides, etc, and paying for music and dance programs. The development has plans for the up-liftment of the local community and to promote craft and tradition of the place. There has (in Rann) already been the initiation of projects for the Mir community, which is very poor but is getting good revenue from making bangles for tourists, and is promoting the embroidery of the local Rabaris and Bharwads.

Hotels also employ the largest percentage of gaming services workers because a large share of gaming takes place in casino hotels. Some gaming services positions are associated with oversight and direction—supervision, surveillance,

and investigation. The industry also employs a large number of recreation and fitness workers. At resort hotels and at vacation and recreational camps, recreation workers organize and conduct recreation activities for guests and campers. These positions office and administrative support occupations can also provide jobs in hotels. Hotel desk clerks, bookkeeping and accounting clerks and switchboard operators ensure that the front office operates smoothly. Hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks process reservations and guest registrations and checkouts, monitor arrivals and departures, handle complaints, and receive and forward mail. The duties of hotel desk clerks depend on the size of the facility. In smaller lodging places, one clerk or a manager may do everything. In larger hotels, a larger staff divides the duties among several types of clerks. Hotels and other accommodations employ a variety of workers found in many other industries. General maintenance and repair workers fix leaky faucets, do some painting and carpentry, make sure that heating and air-conditioning equipment works properly, mow lawns, and exterminate pests.

The Rural tourism will bolster employment generation¹. Banking on the rich traditions of art, craft and culture in the Gujarat villages and aiming at the sustainable tourism development. The village destinations will be marketed based on rich traditions, crafts, accommodation, cuisine, hygiene and other basic amenities etc. their accessibility, environmental issues, Safety law and order situation (for both the local population as well as tourists), etc. There are number of rural areas have been identified based on their core competency in handicrafts, handlooms and culture, close to existing destinations and circuits. The rural tourism will bolster employment and revenue generation at the local level.

Activities like religious and archeological tourism, heritage, corporate tourism, coastal and beach tourism, adventure tourism, highway tourism & medical tourism etc., offers vivid scope for employment generation. The tourism related activities in the form of accommodation projects, food oriented projects, amusement parks and water sports, handcraft village complexes, sea/river cruise, safari project, sports/health facility complexes, etc. are the other areas where this opportunity can't be ignored. The Government would also like to encourage service-oriented projects like travel operation, tour operation, transport operation etc.

RESULTS

The above discussions of tourism potential and related employment coupled with the gaps in planning, provision, positioning and marketing of tourism point towards the requisite interventions at macro as well as micro level. Macro interventions are related with macroeconomic policy framework in which tourism industry operates in the state. On the other hand, micro interventions are related with spatial planning, efficient provision and marketing of tourist destinations. The Government plans regarding employment generation through tourism is lacking efficient implementations of programs policies and plans might be resulting in creation of more tourism related jobs. Some special attention is also required for increasing the employment of women in the tourism industry. Employers should set up programs and schemes encouraging women to move into tourism service occupations. During field observation the author has observed that most of tourism employers are not well trained and lacks proper information. Their knowledge is only money oriented not to satisfy their needs and wants for which the tourism actually occurs.

CONCLUSIONS

The main reason for tourism arrivals in Gujarat is business activity. Being a business industrialized state it is a leading business hub of India. During seasons, the overcrowding of tourists sometimes opens up the loopholes of government policies and implementations. Major constraints are poor quality of infrastructure, malpractices by operators,

¹ Speaking to **Express Travel World**, Tourism Minister, Ambika Soni, New Delhi.

manpower not being qualified resulting in poor quality of service, absence of a diversified value bundle as a product offer to the tourists, proper marketing and promotion, air connectivity and concerns related with carrying capacity and environment. Gujarat has immense opportunity to provide employment in above mentioned fields. No doubt, that most of the centres are lacking manpower & wherever they are, mostly hired not permanent. They are employed at short term basis. Employment is concentrated in cities and resort areas. These are the areas where, tourism policies to be reformed and made it employment friendly.

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